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4 KIDS AMONG 27 KILLED IN RAJKOT FIRE

DILIP SINGH KSHATRIYA
@ Ahmedabad

AT least 27 people, including four children under 12 year, were killed in a massive fire at a gaming zone in Gujarat's Rajkot city on Saturday, police said. The death toll is likely to go up further.

When the fire broke out, over 30 children and their parents were believed to be trapped inside TRP game zone on Kalavad Road in the city, according to eyewitnesses. The source of the blaze was an explosion in the air conditioning unit possibly triggered by a short circuit, they said.

"So far we have confirmed the death of 27 persons in the fire incident. The bodies are charred beyond recognition and hence their identification is difficult," said Assistant Commissioner of Police Radhika Bharai.

Most bodies were completely charred making it difficult to identify them.. Police Commissioner Raju Bhargav said, "I cannot confirm the cause of the fire; it requires probe."

Rajkot Collector Prabhav Joshi said the Fire Control Room received a call around 4.30 pm regarding the blaze. Fire safety personnel faced difficulty in dousing it as it was windy, said a Rajkot Fire Officer. Besides, a temporary structure inside the gaming zone collapsed, compounding the difficulty in the rescue effort, the fire official added.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed grief at the loss of lives in the incident and said the local administration is working to provide help to those affected.

The TRP game zone in Rajkot on fire | x

BODIES CHARRED BEYOND RECOGNITION

- "The fire caused the collapse of the structure. Debris is being cleared," Rajkot Collector Prabhav Joshi said
- Gujarat CM Bhupendra Patel said a Special Investigation Team will probe the fire accident. The state government announced an ex-gratia of ₹4 lakh for the dead and ₹50,000 for injured people

GUJARAT GOVT ORDERS FIRE SAFETY AUDIT

Following the tragedy, the Gujarat government directed all gaming zones across the state to cease operations. Comprehensive inspections, encompassing fire safety equipment and protocol, will be conducted at all game zones. Likewise, the Maharashtra Congress demanded that its state government conduct a fire safety audit of gaming zones and malls

(From left) President Droupadi Murmu, Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud, Union minister S Jaishankar, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Congress leaders Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi show their inked fingers after casting their ballots in the sixth and penultimate phase of general elections, in New Delhi on Saturday | PTI

62% turnout in crucial sixth phase

• LOADS OF VIPs EXERCISE FRANCHISE IN DELHI • ANANTNAG-RAJOURI SEAT RECORD

PREETHA NAIR @ New Delhi

CLOSE to 62% voter turnout was recorded for the sixth and penultimate phase of the Lok Sabha elections held on Saturday. As many as 58 seats across eight states and Union Territories (UTs), including all 10 seats of Haryana and seven of Delhi, voted in this round of polling.

Several politicians and prominent personalities, including President Droupadi Murmu, Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud, Union minister S Jaishankar, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, Congress leaders Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra were among others who cast their votes in the national capital.

Following the pattern of Mumbai, Delhi too registered a low turnout of 58.03% despite the Election Commission of India urging the voters to shun the apathy and exercise their voting rights.

Stakes are high for the BJP-led NDA as it won 40 seats out of the 58 in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. Though the other INDIA bloc partners won five seats in 2019, the Congress scored a duck.

The contest in Delhi and Haryana is crucial for the Opposition parties as they hope to increase the tally in these states. The contest in the national capital is being keenly watched as the INDIA bloc parties — the Congress and the AAP are taking on the BJP. While the BJP swept all seven seats of Delhi in 2014 and 2019 and is looking for a hat-trick, the Opposition is fighting tooth and nail. The AAP is contesting four seats while the Congress has fielded candidates in three seats as per their seat-sharing agreement.

While the BJP won all 10 seats in Haryana in 2019, the Congress is hoping to make a dent this time due to factors such as anti-incumbency and the anger among the farmers and wrestlers against the BJP. Voting was also held on 14 seats of UP, eight seats each of Bihar and West Bengal, six in Odisha, four in Jharkhand and one in J&K. While Bengal recorded the highest turnout at 79.96%, that for the J&K's Anantnag-Rajouri stood at 54.46%, its highest in 40 years. UP's turnout was 54.03% and Haryana 61.63%, according to the EC's app at 1 am on Sunday. P10

Custodial death: 11 cops hurt as mob attacks stn

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Davanagere

ELEVEN policemen were injured when an irate mob attacked a police station at Channagiri town in Davanagere district on Friday night after a man from a minority community allegedly died in custody. Six police vehicles were damaged in the attack.

The mob went berserk after hearing the news that the man from their community allegedly died in police custody. Only a few police personnel were at the station and they could not control the mob. DySP Prashanth Manavalli's efforts to pacify the mob went in vain.

CM: Not a lock-up death

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said that DySP Prashanth Manavalli and inspector Niranjan have been suspended in connection with the youth's death in Channagiri.

Clarifying that it is not a case of lock-up death and the youth suffered an epileptic attack and died in hospital, he said the police officers have been suspended for bringing him to the station without registering an FIR.

Trouble started late in the night after Adil, 33, who was picked up by police from Tipu Nagar in Channagiri for allegedly organising "matka" (illegal betting), died. P4

The police vehicle overturned by the mob in Channagiri on Friday night | EXPRESS

> No one should be brought to police station without registering an FIR. I want to clarify again that it is not a lock-up death
>
> Siddaramaiah, Chief Minister

Activist files private plaint against Modi

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

A private complaint has been filed against Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his alleged hate speech in Rajasthan against the Muslim community.

Engineer and human rights activist Ziaurrahaman Nomani of Bengaluru filed the complaint with the registry of the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Court on May 23.

The complaint has been listed for hearing on May 28. The 42nd Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Court (the special court for trial of cases against sitting as well as former MPs/MLAs triable by magistrate) will take a call on whether the complainant has made a prima facie case or not and proceed further. P3

Parents to be booked if minors caught driving

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

THINK twice before allowing your minor children to ride or drive vehicles. If any minor is caught riding or driving vehicles, his/her parents will be held responsible and sent to jail.

The parents will be booked under non-bailable Sections of the Juvenile Justice Act.

At the monthly police-public meeting, city police commissioner B Dayananda said giving vehicle keys to underaged children is as good as giving a weapon to them. "Either he will kill himself or will kill someone else. All of you must be aware of what has happened in Pune, where a minor boy killed two persons while driving a high-end car. After this, the Pune police decided to book the minor's parents under the Juvenile Justice Act. The same will be followed here. Citing the Pune case, parents should educate their minor children about the dangers involved in riding or driving vehicles," he added.

EXPRESS READ

SIT, Union and state govts know where Prajwal is, says minister Rajanna

Bengaluru: Cooperation and Hassan district In-charge Minister KN Rajanna on Saturday said the Special Investigation Team (SIT) and the state and central governments know JDS MP Prajwal Revanna's whereabouts. "The SIT, state government and Centre know the place and in whose house he (Prajwal) is holed up and also his movements since he is an MP. He can be arrested and passport cancelled immediately...," he told reporters | P4

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